

7/31/79 BA - Mr. Holloman

AX 056

52/UR



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

July 31, 1979

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: The Secretary
The Deputy Secretary

FROM: HA - Patricia M. Derian

U.S. Lawyers' Group Reports to UN
on Argentine Human Rights Abuses

The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights has submitted a report on Argentine human rights abuses to the United Nations under ECOSOC Resolution 1503. The report says these abuses constitute "evidence of a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights." The UN Human Rights Commission has not so far addressed the problem of human rights abuses in Argentina.

As you know, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York sent a mission to Argentina in April to study the human rights situation. The Lawyers Committee's report to the UN is based largely on the mission's findings.

The report contends that changes in Argentina's political and legal structure since 1976 have seriously undermined the most basic protections of human rights and have permitted government security forces to conduct a virtual reign of terror. It says the "desaparecidos" (disappeared persons) are the chief victims of this terror and criticizes the Argentine Government for its refusal to admit knowledge of the abductions or whereabouts of the victims, and for its failure to remedy the situation.

UNCLASSIFIED

81F184
5/5

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to ☐
Date Declassify on Reason

UNCLASSIFIED

- 2 -

The report also discusses the plight of persons detained without formal charge or trial under the Executive's "state of siege" power, and assesses conditions in prisons. It also discusses secret camps where many of the disappeared have reportedly been held.

The report says members of the media, trade unionists, and lawyers have suffered particularly harsh treatment under the present regime because of their potential to challenge Government policies.

The report concludes that the Argentine Government has either suspended or violated a large number of internationally-recognized human rights and undermined virtually all due process guarantees and minimal judicial safeguards for the protection of these rights. Repressive statutes, such as the abolition of the Congress, and banning of political parties and activities, severe restrictions on trade union activities, limitations on press freedom, and the vastly increased power of military authorities in cases involving "subversives" have contributed to the breakdown of the legal structure. The Lawyers Committee concludes that these actions, and the Government's failure to address effectively the problems of the detained and disappeared, have produced "a complete breakdown of the rule of law in Argentina."

ff
Drafted: HA/HR:CEMig; HA/HR:PJFlood:diw
21585 7/31/79
Concurrence: HA/HR:CBSalmon, Jr. *ff*

UNCLASSIFIED